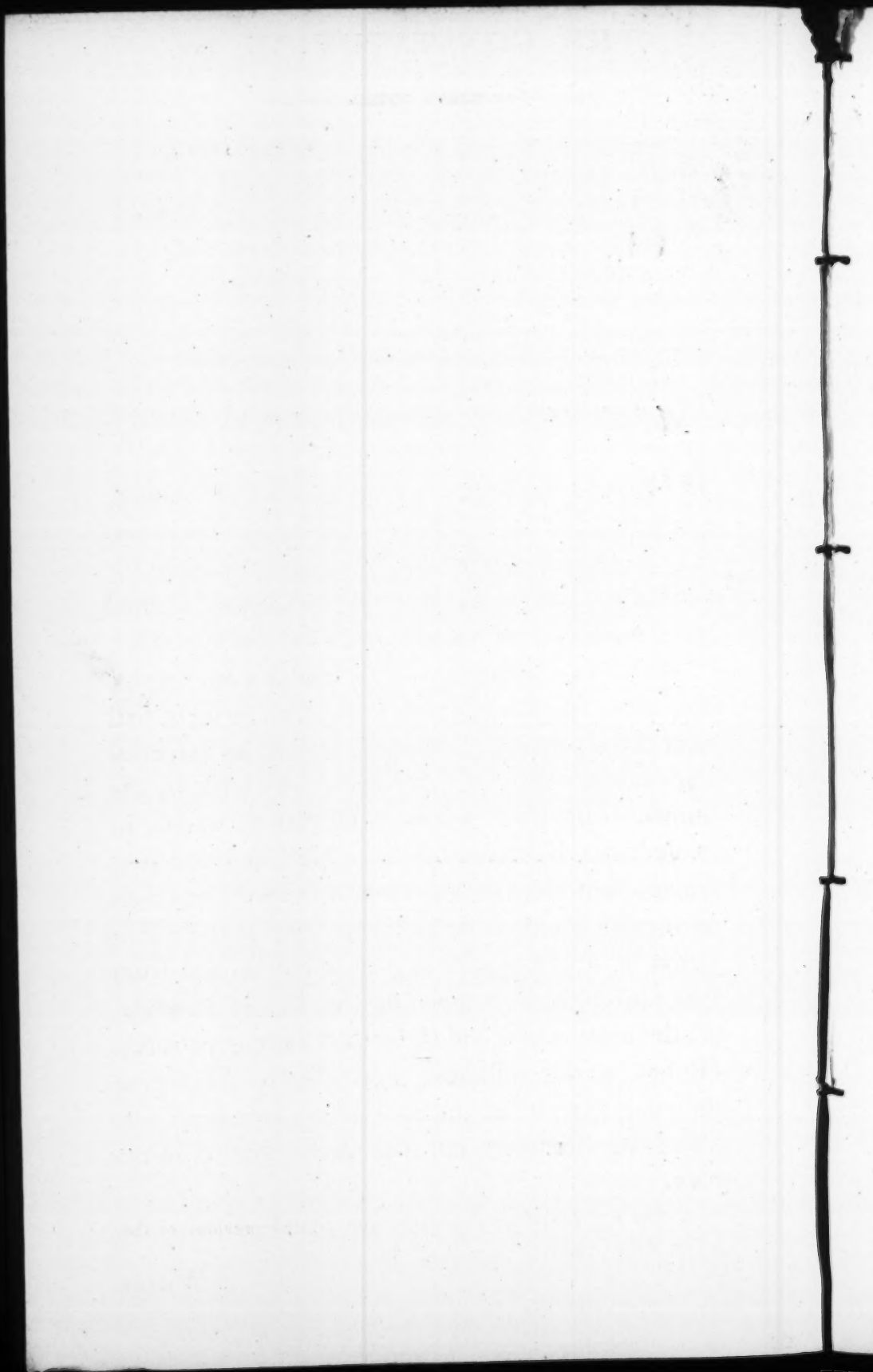


THE
CONSTITUTION,
CIVIL AND MILITARY,
SUCH AS WAS ESTABLISHED BY
ALFRED THE GREAT,

RECOMMENDED
TO THE PEOPLE OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND,
AS THE BASIS OF THEIR UNION,
AND TO THE NATIONS OF THE WORLD PRESENTLY
AT WAR, AS A PROPER CONSTITUTION AND
FORM OF GOVERNMENT, THE ONLY
SURE FOUNDATION
OF A SOLID AND HONOURABLE PEACE.

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1800.



THE CONSTITUTION, &c.

“ ————— Say, who bath beard,
“ *The Voice of Freedom calling to her Sons?*
“ *That Voice which penetrates and fires the Heart,*
“ *Rouses the powers of Action, breaks the spells*
“ *Of Sloth, and stamps the image of Divine*
“ *On Mortal.*”

Countrymen, Friends, and Neighbours,

MR. PITT, with the most splendid eloquence, has submitted to the British House of Commons, that it would be for the substantial interest and grandeur of the Empire†, that Great Britain and Ireland were legislated for by one Imperial Parliament.

WERE I an inhabitant of Ireland, I would cordially agree to this proposal, provided it were first understood, that the Members of such an Imperial Parliament were to be chosen by those who, by the known principles of the Constitution, ought to chuse their Representatives. Mr Pitt has represented, that the Government of Ireland, as originating, no doubt, in its defective state of Representation, is in the highest degree defective; and from that source, as from opening the *Box of Pandora*, all the evils which afflict Ireland have gone forth. He has, in this instance, most clearly discovered the *mote* that is in the eye of his brother, but, alas! he considers not the *beam* that is in his own.

† The first edition of this Paper was printed previous to the Union with Ireland.

WHILE I revere the very perfect state in which the first and second parts of our Constitution stand, and, I trust, ever will stand, I cannot but deplore the defects of the Representative, or third part, of that Constitution.

OUR Gracious Sovereign, whom may God long preserve, appears to his subjects, by this Constitution, in no other light than what is amiable and useful. Our Lords of Parliament, on being ennobled, either for their own merits or public services, or for those of their ancestors, are standing marks of the gratitude of their Country, and for ever may they and their successors remain (like his Majesty) to exercise, as they have very often done, their very salutary *veto*, on the resolutions or proposed laws of the Commons. But the state of the Commons' Representation in Great Britain and Ireland is well known and admitted to be very defective. It must ever be remembred, that the late Lord Chatham decidedly declared, That the Burgh Representation was the rotten part of the Constitution, and, if not speedily amputated, would bring on a mortification of our whole body politic. And to be instructed how, constitutionally, to follow this very salutary advice, we have only to attend to the distinction of the Tax-Bill on Income, as introduced by his Right Hon. Son.

THE distinctions of this Bill on Income, are so simple, that they not only show us where *reform ought to begin, but they also show us where reform ought to end*. The distinctions which this bill makes, are not only valuable in a legislative point

point of view, but they also furnish us with the best means of national defence. And, upon the whole, the Tax-Bill on Income, is the most able comment on the British Constitution, that ever was suggested by the wit of man.

CONTEMPLATING all the valuable purposes to which this famous Bill on Income may be applied, I am put in mind of what Paul says, in passing through Athens, when he observed a Temple dedicated to the unknown God, "That God whom you ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you."

WITH respect to its Legislative merits, the County-inrollments, as to Income, when properly made up, will furnish us with the most correct list of those who should have a vote for the Commons' Representatives in Parliament. By the law of England, every person having an income of forty shillings per annum, was allowed to vote: and if we compare the value of money now, to what it was, when that law was made, it will be found to answer, as near as may be, to a present income of 60*l.* per annum: And Mr. Pitt has very properly exempted all whose income is below that sum, from paying any part of their income for carrying on the war.

SUPPOSING a similar inrollment was to take place in the different Counties of Ireland, as is presently making up for all the Counties of England and Scotland, and we have an Imperial Parliament, freely and fairly chosen, agreeably to the principles of our VENERABLE CONSTITUTION, that will have the name of Imperial, should

should it not be chosen by those Gentlemen, come of age, who pay the Tax on Income. Voting for Members of Parliament was always attached to certain data of property; and if those Gentlemen are not the Commons of Great Britain, who should be represented in Parliament, I beg leave to know who are? By this means, voting would be attached to those who have a real, not nominal, stake in their country, and that portion of health infused into the Constitution, which the Right Hon. Gentleman's Father predicted, would become absolutely necessary.

Towns should be the scenes of industry and trade, not of politics; and I contend, it would be much for the honour and interest of the inhabitants of those Burghs to have no concern with politics, but what they are entitled to by their property.

As to the Military merits of this famous Income Bill, the County-Inrollments, as to Income, will furnish the most correct list of *the posse comitatus*, or military power of each County, which Alfred the Great, who, after dividing the Country into Counties, constituted for suppressing domestic riot, and repelling foreign invasion.

It belongs only to the "Liberal soul to devise liberal things," and to the immortal honour of Alfred, he committed the defence of each County to its own inhabitants, and did not, as at present, *march the Militia of one County into another.*

Our ancient Nobility had the command of this *posse comitatus*, and from those commands their titles originated; and certainly nothing would add
more

more to the dignity and consequence of our present, Nobility than for them, under his Majesty, as the successor of Alfred, to resume those commands; so that we have only to give effect to the native energies of our ancient Constitution, and resort to the Military Establishment of the magnanimous Alfred, to set the business of Invasion at complete defiance.

THERE is no doubt, the French contemplate the conquest of this Country, thro' the medium of Ireland, and that by availing themselves of the discontents of the people, on account of the defective state of their Representation.

WOULD it not therefore be wise in Ministers, to introduce such an improvement of our representation, as would make us correctly understand *what our Constitution is*. In doing so, they have only to place our Election-Laws on their ancient, pure, and manly principles, and that by simply attaching voting to certain *data* of property.

OUR Constitution would thus inspire confidence at home, and command respect abroad. Ministers might then, not only hold it up for the imitation of the French, but likewise for that of our *Allies*, the *Turks* and *Russians*! as a Constitution the best calculated to perpetuate, betwixt *great* nations, *the accustomed relations of peace and amity*.

“ It must be remarked, That the change of the Constitution, or form of Government of a nation, must be the result of conviction, not of coercion.”

IF Gentlemen on the Income County-Tax-Rolls were thus called upon, either by themselves or substitutes, to defend their country, the Nation would assume that Martial appearance, as no wise Government would ever think of attacking. For the County-inrollments, by giving a just idea of the numbers and respectability of the National Constitutional Militia, would show, That even were such a thing attempted, it must prove impracticable. And, in truth, this system of national defence, suggested by the wisdom of Alfred, (the boast of whose life was, *That he had left Englishmen as free as their own thoughts*) cannot be thought of without reverence and awe; and, in case of actual invasion, must exhibit such strength and grandeur, as no invading army durst look in the face.

Legislation, Taxation, and National Defence, would thus be combined for the *public good*; and I submit it "to those whom it may concern," that to bring the present war to a rational conclusion, and render peace subservient to the *substantial* interest and grandeur of the world, the Constitutions and form of Government of Great Britain and France should be similar to that established by Alfred the Great.

To this form of Civil Government, I have no doubt, the present Chief Magistrate of France, BONAPARTE, as a Polititian, would assent; as it would thereby be in his power to ennoble the Military Chiefs of France: And, by giving them the same legislative powers, as the Lords of the British Parliament, and committing the elective part of the French Government to be chosen by those to whom France belongs; both Nations would come to live under a form of government of their own, constructed on principles the most favourable to human happiness.

A BRITON.

